

Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, November 8, 2026
Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA
Knowing Christ – Making Christ Known Through Faith, Hope & Love

Introduction:

Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the Lamb.

PRELUDE
BELL
ANNOUNCEMENTS
BEHOLD WEEKLY CHALLENGE QUESTION

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Please stand as you are able

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

P: O send out your light and your truth.
C: Keep awake and know the joy of your master.
P: Bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.
C: Keep awake and know the joy of your master.
P: I will come to your altar and praise you with the harp.
C: Keep awake and know the joy of your master.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose compassion endures forever.
C: Amen.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:**

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: You show us how to live as your servants, yet we act as though your teaching applies to everyone else but us. We pass judgment on others, devalue ourselves and disrespect your creation. Show us the way back to the path which leads to life, and help us repair the damage we have caused to our relationships, ourselves and this earth, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

P: Through God's love we are forgiven, and all things are being made new through Christ. God's grace is enough to cover us and make us whole again, to live and serve another day. Let us rejoice that our God is full of mercy!

C: Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN: *"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"* (ELW 244)**

1 Rejoice, rejoice, believers,
and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing,
and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising
and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle;
at midnight comes the cry.

2 The watchers on the mountain
proclaim the bridegroom near;
go forth as he approaches
with alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting;
the gates wide open stand.

Arise, O heirs of glory;
the bridegroom is at hand.

3 **The saints, who here in patience**
their cross and suff'rings bore,
shall live and reign forever
when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory
the Lamb they shall behold;
in triumph cast before him
their diadems of gold.

4 **Our hope and expectation,**
O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for,
o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted,
we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption
that sets your people free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660-1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823-1907

***GREETING:**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

***KYRIE: *sung* (ELW pg. 213)**

Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**
Christe eleison: **Christ, have mercy.**
Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE *"Glory to God"* ELW pg. 213**

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;

glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

Lord Jesus Christ,
only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth,

and peace to God's people on earth.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P: O God of justice and love,

C: You illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Please be seated

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

FIRST READING: AMOS 5:18-24

In the days of Amos, people thought that the day of the LORD would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The LORD demands justice and righteousness in the community.

18 Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why do you want the day of the
Lord? It is darkness, not light, 19 as if someone fled from a lion and was met by a
bear or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall and was bitten by
a snake. 20 Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light, and gloom with no
brightness in it? 21 I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your
solemn assemblies. 22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain
offerings, I will not accept them, and the offerings of well-being of your fatted
animals I will not look upon. 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps. 24 But let justice roll down like water
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. The word of the Lord…**Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 70 ~ *Congregation reads the* ***bold***

You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry. (Ps. 70:5)

1 Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me.

[2]Let those who seek my life be put to shame and confounded; let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.

[3]Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat over me turn back because of their shame.
[4]Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; let those who love your salvation say forever, "Great is the Lord!"

[5]But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me quickly, O God. You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry.

SECOND READING: 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.

[13]We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. [14]For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. [15]For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. [16]For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17]Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will be with the Lord forever. [18]Therefore encourage one another with these words. The word of the Lord…. **Thanks be to God.**

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: (ELW pg. 216)

Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia

GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 25:1-13

Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] [1]"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. [2]Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. [3]When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, [4]but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. [5]As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. [6]But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' [7]Then all those young women got up and trimmed their lamps. [8]The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' [9]But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' [10]And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. [11]Later the other young women came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' [12]But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' [13]Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." The Gospel of the Lord…**Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S TIME & SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: *"Thy Word"* (Worship & Rejoice #664)

Refrain
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path.
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path.

1
When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way,
Still you're there right beside me.
And nothing will I fear as long as you are near,
Please be near me to the end.

Refrain
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path

2
I will not forget your love for me,
and yet my heart forever is wandering.
Jesus be my guide, hold me to your side;
and I will love you to the end.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path.
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path.

Words: Amy Grant: (1960); para, Psalm 119:105
Music: Michael W. Smith (1957)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

L: United with the great cloud of witnesses, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

L: You create and sustain the earth's natural rhythms so that all life might thrive. Show us the wisdom and wonder of nature's balance; make us careful stewards of our common home. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We thank you for the selflessness of our veterans who've sacrificed so much for our freedoms. On this Veterans Day, we pray for their families as well, who share in the burdens of service. May you bring them comfort and unity, healing the wounds that may linger in silence. Help us to remember that their struggles don't end with deployment, and inspire us to be advocates for their well-being, showing them the love and respect they profoundly deserve. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We pray for a safe and successful hunting season. We thank you for the opportunity to spend quiet time in your creation, reflecting on life and

drawing closer to you. We thank you for the beauty of the outdoors, for the provisions you provide through the harvest, and for the blessings that can be shared with others. Above all, we ask for Your protection over all hunters and for safety for everyone who shares the fields and woods. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You hasten to heal our wounds and make whole what is broken. Comfort individuals facing a difficult diagnosis, receiving palliative care, or facing uncertain treatment options. We pray especially for Jerry, Bruce, Kristy, Ricky, Larry, Joan, Dennis, Lois, Gary, Shirley, Joyce, Kim, Sara, Marg, Karen, Pete, Lynnsy, Barb, Dirk, Jeramie, David, Denny, Steph, and Al. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You give rest to weary hearts and bodies. As the days grow shorter, help us to move more slowly and intentionally through our days, honoring the need for quiet and stillness. God, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Into your steadfast love, faithful God, we entrust all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus, your beloved.

C: Amen.

Please stand as you are able

***APOSTLES' CREED: (ELW pg. 105)**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Please be seated

OFFERING

We thank you for our gifts of time, talent, and treasure that help this congregation, to continue our ministry together, and to make Christ known in our communities and the world.

OFFERING HYMN: *"Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart*" vs. 4 (ELW 800)

4 Teach me to love you as your angels love,
one holy passion filling all my frame:
the baptism of the heav'n-descended dove,
my heart an altar, and your love the flame.

Text: George Croly, 1780-1860

Please stand as you are able

***OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

P: Dear God,

C: We offer you the gift of our lives, devoted to your work of justice and mercy. Receive these offerings given in love and gratitude toward you, the creator of all. For the sake of our savior Jesus we pray. Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER: *sung* (CLH 632)**

Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to our neighbor in need

***BLESSING:**
The holy Trinity,
Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you with wisdom to welcome the reign of God,
today and always.
THREE FOLD AMEN

***SENDING HYMN: *"Jesus, the Very Thought of You"* (ELW 754)**

1 Jesus, the very thought of you
fills us with sweet delight;
but sweeter far your face to view
and rest within your light.

2 No voice can sing, no heart can frame,
nor can the mind recall
a sweeter sound than your blest name,

O Savior of us all!

3 **O Hope of ev'ry contrite soul,**
O joy of all the meek,
how kind you are to those who fall!
How good to those who seek!

4 **O Jesus, be our joy today;**
help us to prize your love;
grant us at last to hear you say:
"Come, share my home above."

Text: attr. Bernard of Clairvaux, 1091-1153; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878

***DISMISSAL:**

P: Go in peace. Encourage one another.

C: Thanks be to God!

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson Kristy Fyhrie
Larry Sather Joan Burquest
Dennis Rosenquist Lois Rosenquist
Ricky Hart Sara Skoglund
Steph Stueve
Denny Hagen – uncle of Mark Ratajesak
Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner
Marg Peterson -friend of the Thoms
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons
Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons
Kim Casavan – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Karen Schlosser – mother of Justin Schlosser
Pete Baugh – brother-in-law of Pr. Ken Bowman
Barb Hoyhtya – friend of the Thoms
Dirk Bergquist – friend of Esther members
Jeramie Harris – friend of the Townsends
David Meidinger – cousin of Jewel Townsend

Al Ratajesak – uncle of Mark Ratajesak
Family and Friends of: Bruce Carter, Gary Willie, Connie Pesta,
Kathy Wilkins, Jim Schlosser, Leroy Olson, Dale Flemming, Wally Schlosser, Carter Stockert, Woodrow Peery, and Wes Hoyhtya.

THIS WEEK AT ESTHER

Sunday, November 8th – *Twenty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost*
Sunday Fellowship Before & After Worship
8:30 am - WELCA
9 am – Sunday School
10 am – Worship led by SAM Jewel Townsend
2 pm – Worship at St. William's

Wednesday, November 11th
6pm – Confirmation: Pizza & Movie Night: "Luther" Part 2 – Parents and Mentors are invited to attend

Sunday, November 15th – *Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost*
Sunday Fellowship Before and After Worship
9 am – Sunday School
9:15 am – Behold Connect & Reflect: Coffee & Conversation
10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by Pastor Dennis Preston
2 pm – Worship at St. William's

SERVING IN NOVEMBER

Pastor: Nov 8- SAM Jewel Townsend, Nov 15- Pr. Dennis Preston, Nov 22 – Pr. Greg Billberg, Nov 29- Pr. Ken Bowman
Organists: Marcia Guenther
Altar Care: Donna Pederson
Usher: NEED VOLUNTEER
Acolyte: Nov 8- NEED VOLUNTEER, Nov 15-NEED VOLUNTEER, Nov 22- Sawyer Ratajesak, Nov 29- Sawyer Ratajesak
Lay Reader: Chris Carter
Communion Assistant: Chris Carter
Birthday Card Sender: Confirmation Class

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Nov. 8 – 9 am
Nov. 15- 9 am
Nov. 22 – 9 am – Christmas Program Practice
Nov. 29- NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
Dec. 6 – 9 am – Christmas Program Practice
Dec. 13- 8:30 am - Christmas Program Practice and Program to follow in Worship at 10 am
Dec. 20 – All People Sunday School
Dec. 27- NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

NEWS AND NOTES

Check out the Esther Calendar on our website to stay up to date on everything happening! Go to estherlutheran.com and click on "Esther Calendar."

Youth are selling 2027 calendars! Cost $10. There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex. **Orders due by November 29th.**

We will be decorating for the Christmas Season following worship on Sunday, November 22nd. Any help is appreciated!

Widows & Singles Share & Care Day will be Friday, November 20th. They will meet at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Parkers Prairie, at 12:30 pm for a potluck dinner. At 1:00 Arvig cybersecurity analyst, Amanda Nelson, will speak on how to detect AI scams. RSVP to Joyce at 320-815-4132 by Nov. 13th.

Applications for both campers and camp counselors at Luther Crest is open. Don't forget that financial assistance is available through our Camp Fund to help cover camp costs. We encourage everyone to apply and take advantage of this opportunity! If you need an application, you can find the Esther Lutheran Church Camp and Spiritual Growth Fund Application on our website at estherlutheran.com under "Faith Formation Resources."

Get your lefse ready for the holidays! Each package includes four lefse for $7.

Please submit your orders by November 30th. Order forms are available in the Narthex, or you can place your order by calling Lana Doll at 218-280-6326.

Mark your calendars! Our lefse-making events are coming up soon!

- **First Event:** November 20th & 21st
- **Second Event:** December 4th & 5th

Any and all help is greatly appreciated! Whether you can help for a little while or the whole time, we'd love to have you join us. Thank you for your time and support!

December 6th is our Christmas Market! A sign-up sheet for soup & BBQ will be available soon. If you are unable to bring food, but would still like to contribute, monetary donations are also welcome. Please make checks payable to WELCA and give them to either Luella or Lana.

Simply Flourish in Parkers Prairie is once again sponsoring its "Sponsor a Resident" program. This year, every resident at St. William's Living Center and McCornell Court will receive a 4.5-inch poinsettia and a handwritten holiday card. If you would like to help spread some Christmas cheer, please contact them at 218-338-3800 to sponsor a resident. Thank you for helping make the season brighter for our local seniors!

The Bell Tower is leaking and needs to be repaired. Because of the high reach and difficult area to work with, we do not have an exact idea of cost, but it could surpass $50,000. Please consider helping with this important and much needed repair. Help keep the bell ringing! Please send your donation to the church: 11019 625th Ave Parkers Prairie, MN 56361 or scan the QR code.

Vanco online giving platform is a great way to set up a scheduled giving plan for even when you cannot make it to church. Scan the QR code, go online to estherlutheran.com, go to the tab "Give to Esther Lutheran Church" and click on the link https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZP4R or download the app

Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement. Any questions please ask Mandy Arvidson.



We welcome you to join in the weekly "Behold the New Has Come" devotions available on our website estherlutheran.com on the "Behold" tab. Devotions are posted to the website and emailed out each Monday. If you are not currently on the email list and want to be, please notify Mandy in the office. Each weekly devotion includes a challenge for the week.

This past week's challenge is:

How can we "suck out all the marrow of life" this week? How can the words of God fill us up and give us the same pleasure as the best meal we have ever had? Take some time to ponder what it means to "not live on bread alone".

Ask yourself, what are the "empty calories" in our spiritual life? What things should we consider getting rid of because they are not filling our soul as they should be? Take a little extra time this week to fill your soul with the "food" that comes from listening to God's word.

We hope these devotions and weekly challenges will inspire conversations and stories that we can share with one another as, together, we grow in faith through this initiative.

You belong here. We believe that each person has unique gifts, are created in God's image, and is a beloved child of God. We welcome you to join us each week to share in the community of faith at Esther - "Knowing Christ - making Christ known through faith, hope and love". If you would like to become a member of Esther, please contact Mandy in the church office at 218-338-2171 or secretary@estherlutheran.net or Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503 or jewellht17@gmail.com.

Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA
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